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REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the application. Claim 2 has been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, where the phrase "nearly-rectangular" has been replaced with "rectangular," thereby obviating the rejection. The amendment is fully supported by the application as originally filed.

Independent claims 1 and 11 recite a printing plate and a method of relief printing, respectively, in which the printing plate includes a raised part having at least one groove formed on its printing surface (see, e.g., FIG. 1B showing grooves 3 formed in the raised part 2).

Claims 1, 3, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 1,442,338 to Herr in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2002/0073856 to Davis et al. ("Davis"). The remaining claims were rejected on combinations involving the above references. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The proposed combination of Herr in view of Davis does not teach or suggest a printing plate including a raised part for printing, the raised part having "at least one groove formed on its printing surface" (claim 1), or a method of relief printing using the printing plate (claim 11).

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2 of Herr, a printing plate includes a printing surface 11, where a back 12 of the plate is formed with a series of grooves 13. In other words, the grooves 13 are formed not on the printing surface 11, but on a surface opposite to the printing surface 11, i.e., the back 12. In Herr, the grooves 13 (or "14" in FIGS. 3 and 4) provide flexibility to the printing plate during hammering or forcing down of the printing surface (see page 1, lines 86-93 of Herr), but the grooves cannot hold printing substance to provide an increased thickness of the printing substance as in the Applicants' claimed invention (see, e.g., specification at page 9, lines 15-16).

Therefore, Herr does not teach or suggest a printing plate including a raised part having at least one groove "formed on its printing surface" (claim 1; *see also* claim 11).

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On page 3, lines 1-2 of the Office Action of 07/25/2006, it was admitted that Herr does not teach or suggest at least "a raised part shaped as a rectangular frame in plan view."

The Davis reference was cited allegedly to remedy the deficiencies of Herr, where FIG. 3A of Davis discloses a letterpress 12 including "a plurality of active areas or dies, typically arranged as a matrix of rectangles," such as gasket seal patterns 121 (paragraph 0010 of Davis).

However, as indicated above, the grooves of Herr are not formed on its printing surface. Therefore, even if the gasket seal patterns 121 of Davis were somehow combined with Herr, the proposed combination would not teach or suggest a printing plate including a raised part having at least one groove "formed on its printing surface," at least because the grooves/raised parts of Herr are not formed on the printing surface.

Moreover, Davis is directed to offset printing of gasket seals on a wafer, and thus one of ordinary skill in the art would not combine the gasket seal arrangement of Davis with the printing plate of Herr.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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